The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

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Summer.

Summer, Summer ! who so fair
Of the spirits sent to earth !
Here and there and everywhere,
Radiant beauty, music, mirth.

In the beech-tree's light and shade,
In the quiet cattle's rest,
In the deeper, greener blade,
In the chirping fledgling's nest ;

In the larks that rise and sing,
In the games upon the green,
In the insects' murmuring wings,
In the river's languid sheen ;

In the Church's ivied tower,
In the daisies on the grave,
In the garden's rosy bower,
In the corn-field's emerald wave.

In the nestled cottage peep,
In the old man at his door,
In the vines that round him creep,
In the swallows as they soar ;

In the fields with dew-drops sown,
In the wandering zephyr's sigh,
In the ditch with nettles grown,
In the clouds that pile the sky ;

In the balm of quiet night,
In the moon's more peaceful ray,
In the songs of waking light,
In the burning heat of day !

Angel summer sent to earth
In these mortal raiments drest,
All thy wealth of light and mirth
Is God's love made manifest.

B. W.

Manchester College Pulpit. No. 3.

Divine Desolations.

PREACHED AT MANCHESTER COLLEGE, MAY 5th,
BY REV. D. DRUMMOND.

PSALM xlvi., 8.—"Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth."

So, then, it is an old story this of desolations in the earth, and people to whom we look back as having lived in a remote antiquity thought of times more ancient than their own, and moralized, as we do, amid the ruins of a vanished grandeur. Broken bow and spear, and chariots blackened with fire, told how conquering enemies had swept over the country, and the triumphs and the horrors of war had ceased because there was nothing more to pillage, but devastation had marked tower and palace as its own. We are so accustomed to regard God as the Creator, the Lord of life and light, that we do not often think of him as the Destroyer, who directs the course of darkness and death. Yet the latter aspect of his being is in reality no less obvious than the former, and must contain some lesson which it were well to take to heart.

It was an axiom in ancient philosophy that that which begins must come to an end, that creation implied in its very idea an inevitable dissolution. The world as we know it is a stream of incessant change, and things make their appearance only to run a longer or a shorter course, and then melt away from view into the shadow-land from which they came. The power of creativeness is so full and free that pictures of incomparable loveliness are blotted out as of no value, to be replaced by others as beautiful

and as transient. The frost covers our window panes with most exquisite tracery, and suspends glittering spangles from every bough; but even while we gaze and wonder they melt away, and leave not a trace behind. The setting sun lights up with many-coloured radiance the procession of clouds, and makes the barren mountains gleam like burnished gold, and paints a tender flush upon Alpine snows, and we would feast our eyes upon a scene so marvellous, and adore the hidden power from which it comes. But it stays not; the glory fades before our eyes, and night soon wraps in sable folds mountain and cloud. It would seem as though such things were made only to be destroyed, and, when tried even by our own little measures, they are swift and evanescent. But there are other things which, when compared with the scale of our brief life, appear permanent and unchanging. The firm-set mountains have become an emblem of stability, and sun and moon and stars shine down upon us as they did upon the Chaldeans of old. Yet to Him, with whom a thousand years are as one day, these too are transient, and mark but moments in the vastness of his eternity. Though the landscape presents the same imposing features from generation to generation, nevertheless the mountains are devastated by frost and storm, and their desolate peaks and wooded valleys tell the geologist how the agents of destruction have been continually at work. The sun itself, so far as we can tell, must cool like other masses of glowing matter, and roll at last an extinguished ball amid planets worn out and dead; and the earth will become what the moon is already, a scene of universal desolation. Thus the doom of transiency is on all that appears most stable, and the Creator is also the Destroyer.

But it was not the desolations brought about by the slow processes of nature that the Psalmist had immediately in view. There are others which affect the heart more nearly, and appeal more quickly to our sympathies. The destruction of what the hands of man have reared, telling us at once of man's power and man's feebleness, awakens the pity and horrors of a tragic tale. The crumbling walls of some feudal tower, the roofless arches and columns of a deserted abbey, tune the mind to melancholy thought; and though these may be solitary relics of an outgrown past amid the higher and better life of the present, we cannot but yield the offering of a moment's sorrow to the departed days, and wonder amid the silence and solitude that warrior and priest alike have left such noble fabrics to the owls and bats. But the impression is intensified a thousand-fold when at every turn we find ourselves amid the relics of a vanished empire, and the words continually recur to the mind, "Behold, what desolations he hath made in the earth." What wealth and power, what daring ambition and triumphant pride, what artistic skill and boldness of conception, and must we not add what grinding toil and abject slavery and coarse brutality are attested by these mighty ruins. There they remain, the shattered and silent witnesses of human greatness and human bitterness. Here are stones trodden by the feet of conquerors, whose names were the terror of the world. There are arches that commemorate victories which sealed the fate of nations. In this vast space, beneath the open sky, the multitudes assembled to listen to the persuasive tones of orators and statesmen. In yonder majestic basilica, marked now by dusty remnants of walls and columns, lawyers met to plead their cases, and judges gave the solemn decisions of the law. There in a noble temple, adorned with all the splendour of marble and gold, and enriched with cunning works from the hand of the sculptor, the rites of religion were performed. Within the circuit of this stupendous wall, where we wander beneath empty arches and climb deserted stairs, thousands upon thousands used to assemble to gaze with brutal joy upon the fights of gladiators, or to raise an exulting laugh at the dying groan of the martyr. But the decrepitude of age has crept over the proud empire. Invasion has desolated the land, and avarice or need has pillaged its treasures, and turned its palaces and temples into quarries; and the hand of the antiquarian recovers, with slow and painful toil, the buried relics of a greater time. Such are the desolations which in past ages have overtaken the kingdoms of the world. Egypt, Nineveh, Babylon, Rome, have fallen before the fierce ravages of man and the slow decay of years; and their fate often raises the anxious question whether there is a law of death for nations as for individuals, and whether our civilisation, of which we are so proud, is to pass

away, and leave only its desolations to excite the languid interest of a future age.

But, in addition to the slow process of decay, there are other and more appalling means of destruction. The earthquake and the volcano pay no regard to human wishes, and overwhelm with sudden ruin the industry of years. In the old story of Sodom and Gomorrah these are treated as the agents of a moral purpose, and the cities are destroyed on account of their sin. How far the operation of unchanging laws can be harmonised with this view, we cannot pause to enquire; it is sufficient for us at present to remember that our lives are spent amid uncertainties, and we should always be ready for the end. The religious mind will seek for some Divine purpose at the heart of things; and it is not surprising that when Vesuvius wakened from its long slumber, and poured forth its fiery ruin upon Herculaneum and Pompeii, Jews and Christians saw a terrible judgment upon heathenism, and thought the last day was at hand.

In seeking to draw forth some lesson for our own guidance from the desolations which so often in the past have waited upon human magnificence, we may make a broad distinction between those which come suddenly through some physical catastrophe, and those which are brought about more slowly by the hands of man. The former, however appalling at the moment, do not affect the fate of nations, and only cause a momentary disturbance in the progress of events. It may be that the laws which bind together the multitude of worlds into a single universe have some vast moral purpose behind them; but with our view, limited to one tiny planet, we are unable to discern it, and it certainly appears to our imperfect vision as though the great forces of nature paid no attention to moral distinctions, but fulfilled their appointed function, careless whether the good or the evil stood in their way. We can use them for moral ends, and accept them as good since they express the will of the Creator; but their action, so far as we can see, is not dependent on our virtue or our sin.

But the case is altered when we come to contemplate the fate of nations, and the slow decay and ruin which come upon them in the course of human events. Whatever difficulties may be presented by particular cases, I think we may lay it down as a truth that righteousness exalts, and wickedness debases, a nation. The greatness of a nation consists not in the abundance of the things that it possesses, but in faithfully following some beacon-light of God, some Divine ideal, which subdues individual selfishness, and infuses a noble and generous spirit into public life; and only while seeking that which is above it can it rise, and lay up increasing treasures of mental and spiritual wealth. And not only this real and interior greatness, but outward distinction and power are dependent upon the energy of moral ideals; for solid and enduring strength, founded on mutual confidence and ready devotion to the public weal, allies itself with high resolve and purity of motive. Thus is fulfilled, in the case of nations, that which was spoken in reference to individuals, that, if they seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, outward blessings will be added unto them. But if these last are made the chief objects of desire, if all ideal ends are lost in luxury and greed, if sensuality and vice usurp the throne of reason and conscience, and public virtue can be seduced by opportunities of gain into dissimulation and treachery, then the foundations of a people's greatness are undermined, and slowly but surely physical follows moral decay. It is from this law of retribution, which works itself out in the destiny of nations, that we derive some hope for the future of our race. Corrupt as is our life in many ways, there are moral and spiritual forces among us which were hardly known in the ancient world. The old heathen religions had not much effect upon morals; but under Christianity religion and morality have become indissolubly united, and if in some of its degraded forms it appears to be little better than the old Paganism with a thin gilding of Christian names and symbols, still these names and symbols can be associated only with sacred and elevated ideas, and serve to keep before the mind, however imperfectly, the spiritual demands of a holy faith. And apart from the official organs of religion there is a determined warfare on behalf of righteousness, an effort to make justice paramount over self interest, a resolve to put down whatever is foul and corrupting in our social life, which afford the happiest augury for the future. Some apprehensions may indeed arise from the apparent decay of religious faith; but

that decay does not, I think, to any great extent, spring from the moral roots of life, but rather from the struggle of the mind to free itself from hampering dogmas, and press on towards new ideals. It is indeed a time of trial; but, if men only bid the old idols to stand aside, and fix their gaze on some undefined glory, I have no fear for the result. To all aspiring souls there is always a glory to be revealed, and within the splendour forms of beauty will at last shape themselves, and once more give precision and power to our thought and worship. Out of the decay of decrepid empires may spring the youthful vigour of a higher civilization; and if only we are true to the light within, out of the desolations of creed and ritual will arise a nobler faith and a more spiritual worship.

But we must turn to another order of reflection that touches the mind when we wander among the desolations of a mighty past. We think not first of the moral decay which these things indicate, nor of the monsters in human form who once ruled in these marble palaces. Rather do we dwell on the transiency of human possessions and the vanity of human wishes. We look upon the tombs, and see how the same sorrow has subdued the heart through all the generations, and we drop a quiet tear as we read, in words graven long centuries ago, how some one "most afflicted" erected this monument to "sweetest" child or wife, or husband or brother, and we note how many inscriptions record an early death. Beneath the surface of a corrupt time, and the miserable quarrels and vile plottings to which history devotes itself, the dear human heart was there with its sweet affections and tender regrets, and loving hands placed little trinkets and even dolls beside the body of the darling child whose presence would gladden the home no more. Or we gaze upon works of art, often mutilated, often of unknown origin, but evincing a loftiness of conception, a severity of taste, and a deftness of execution which carry us away into an ideal world, where the varied play of human emotion was recognised, and its joy and grief, its horror and its pain, found, through skilful hands, enduring expression in marble; and we see how, in the olden days, beauty made its revelations to the soul, and there were those who surrendered themselves to its power, and amid the vulgar brawls of ambition sought to place some lovely ideal before the eyes of men. But all is past, the glory and the shame. Surely men disquieted themselves in vain. They heaped up riches, and knew not that the tooth of time would corrode the walls of their palaces, and the empire which seemed destined for eternity would fall, "to hastening ills a prey." In vain we lay hold of that which is outward. All slips from our grasp, and the heart which was made for that which is eternal, can find no rest till it turns to that which is above, which eye has not seen nor ear heard. "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," pass away, and he who places his hope in these things must stand at last amid their desolations, and find himself without support. It is only the spiritual that abides, those treasures of intellect and soul which were accumulated for no selfish end, and which moth and rust cannot touch. The material grandeur, which seduced men's hearts from truth and righteousness, has sunk into the dust; but the genius of ancient days, which waited upon divine ideals, and gave utterance to heaven-born thought, or realized an unimagined beauty, has become a permaneut element in the life of mankind, and spiritual force has triumphed over the brute force that mocked and trampled on it. When Rome was ruling its vast empire with all the arrogance of undisputed domination, and it seemed as though nothing could shake that imposing fabric of political and military supremacy, an obscure movement was beginning among some humble people in a remote province, a movement wholly destitute of worldly authority, and dependent on the originality and energy of a single mind. The leader of that movement was seized and put to an ignominious death; and if you had asked which would last longer, the dominion of the Cæsars or the spiritual kingdom which he attempted to found, the wise men of the time would have laughed at your simplicity. But "the weakness of God is stronger than men." Desolation has invaded the rooms of imperial state, and names before which nations trembled, and which they even worshipped with profane adulation, served only to "point a moral or adorn a tale." But the name of Jesus Christ is venerated in the very citadel of Roman power, and in countries that were never trodden by Roman legions. While we look at the desola-

tions of material wealth we look also at the conquest of spiritual thought. Many a Pagan corruption may have fastened itself upon this new kingdom, many an unfaithfulness may shame its votaries; but the spiritual ideal to which the soul of Jesus was utterly surrendered is still winning new victories, and slowly fashioning the world into a kingdom of God. It is there, amid the high themes of spiritual thought and worship, and in the fidelity of consecrated lives, that we must look for our imperishable treasure; and while we "behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth," we shall see also his eternal light shining calm and pure above us, wooing us to enter that heavenly realm, where justice and truth, holiness and love, shall abide amid "the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds."

Among the Cumberland Hills.

MAY, 1895.

This morning I returned from a holiday among the Cumberland hills. I do not remember—and this is my fifth or sixth visit—having seen the district to such advantage. The weather, for one who loves climbing, was perfect—sunshine, with cool wind and no rain. I made several ascents, including one which I have long desired to make, that of Helvellyn. A mountain climb, to those who have the strength for it, is, especially when one needs a change, refreshing to mind and body. I don't know anything like it to drive away the cobwebs, and give one new thoughts. Besides the hearty exercise there is the discipline of the undertaking, the easy start, then the steady and severe upward effort, the slowly widening view, and finally, the sudden burst of beauty at the summit. I never can climb a mountain without turning over and over the project in life that happens to lie nearest, and thinking "Shall I arrive at the end of it?" And on reaching the top I say, or rather I feel, "May that project succeed like this; may it equally repay the labour." For, like Christian on the Hill Difficulty, we forget the burden and the toil in the realisation of our hopes.

I felt thus in going up Helvellyn, the summit view of which surpassed all my expectations. It is a solemn experience to stand alone on such a peak; it is no occasion for play; the wind blows strong, and there is danger in approaching the precipices. It is bitterly cold; snow lies yet in the clefts. It is nearly the highest point in England. Only the two peaks of Scafell, clear in their rugged grandeur, a few miles away, rise higher. One remembers how Scott and Wordsworth and Coleridge and Matthew Arnold loved Helvellyn, and how Scott and Wordsworth made the ascent together from Dove Cottage. And then, turning to the past, one reflects on the age of these hills. The bare peaks and sharp edges rising up all around from the deep cavities, help one to realise the vast geological processes that went on in the earth before man came. For what countless years these mountains have stood! How little they have altered in the memory of man! They *have* altered; they *do* crumble; they are not eternal; God wears them away; their age is nothing to His eternity; but they are "everlasting" compared with the brief life of men. They have scarcely undergone a change during two thousand years of British history. Generation after generation has beheld them as we behold them now. In a field belonging to the farm where I have been staying, there is a Druidical circle. The summits of three mountains—Skiddaw, Blencathara, and Helvellyn—are visible from it. Here Britains worshipped, looking up to the hills, long before Christianity came to them. Cumberland remained British after the English invasion. The river Derwent, which flows past Keswick, formed the boundary line between the British kingdoms of Strathclyde and Wales. A British monk, St. Kentigern, the patron saint of Glasgow, commonly known as St. Mungo, is said to have set up the cross at Keswick whilst on his way from Glasgow to St. David in Wales, about the year 553. The spot is still called Cross-thwaite, that is, the Thwaite, or Forest-clearing, of the Cross; and, probably where his building of wood and thatch was erected, the present church of St. Kentigern stands, in the Gothic style of the fifteenth century. It is a typical old English parish church, with a fine mingling of old and new. In the chancel floor are mosaics of a bird, a tree, a bell, and a fish, illustrative of the legends of St. Kentigern. Close by is the stone effigy of an earl, whose feet, we are informed, were never out of the stirrups, and the brass monument of a knight who fought at Flodden Field. At the west end of the church

is a font of the time of Wiclif and Chaucer. Elsewhere, coming down to modern times, are monuments to Dr. Brownrigg, the friend of Benjamin Franklin; to William, brother of Raisley Calvert, the friend of Wordsworth; and to Southey, whose body is interred with that of his wife, sister-in-law of Coleridge, in the graveyard.

St. Kentigern, I have said, belonged to the ancient British Church. Then came the Irish missionaries into England from Iona. On descending from Helvellyn, I saw windows in the little church of Wythburn representing the brother saints, Cuthbert and Herbert. They are linked together by Bede, who was a boy of 14 when they died, both of them in the year 687. Cuthbert, disciple of the Irish missionary Ardan, after being a monk at Melrose, became head of the monastery at Lindisfarne, and a friend of the Abbess of Whitley, Hilda. Herbert settled in Cumberland, and carried on the work of Kentigern. Every year, Bede tells us, they used to meet for council and friendship. Cuthbert was distinguished for his activity. Bede says that "he often went out of the monastery, sometimes on horseback, but oftener on foot, and repaired to the neighbouring towns where he preached the way of truth. "It was then," he says, "the custom of the English people, that when a clerk or priest came into the town, they all flocked together to hear." But Cuthbert "was wont chiefly to resort to such places, and preach in such villages, as being seated high up amid craggy, uncouth mountains were frightful to behold, and whose poverty and barbarity rendered them inaccessible to other teachers. He would often stay a week, sometimes two or three, and sometimes a whole month, before he returned home, continuing among the mountains to allure that rustic people by his preaching and example to heavenly employments." Herbert was more of an anchorite, but his work was probably of a similar kind. He lived on a little island in Derwentwater, named after him, S. Herbert's Isle. Every morning from my bedroom window I could look down on this island in the lake. It is quite small, perhaps 200 yards long and fifty broad. In the middle of it, among some trees, are the ruins of Herbert's old cell. I love to think of him as one of those hermit workers who, like Elijah, John the Baptist, Augustine, and Jerome, have done so much for the world; and I love also to think of him among those Irish pioneers of Christianity and civiliztion to whom the English are so much indebted.

Cumberland is still one of the most British parts of England. The old British names, such as Helvellyn, Penruddock, Bencathra, Glaremara, and many others, have not been supplanted. The people follow the pastoral life of their forefathers, and are famous for their cattle breeding. They are a free-spoken and free-thinking folk, attached to ancient sports and customs, and with the artistic and poetic temperament of the Kelt. Wordsworth is the highest expression of the Cumbrian character. He was born and bred, and he spent most of his life, and he died, in Cumberland. His spirit pervades this district. We feel how the grand scenery fed him with great thoughts of God, and how the solitude of the hills awoke in his gentle nature love for the smallest living creatures. And, like a true Cumbrian, he was *obstinate* in his faith in the Universe, at a time when English society was sceptical and critical.

Wordsworth brought other poets, and through them a long line of writers and thinkers to Cumberland. A great living teacher still has his home there. At Coniston, not many miles over the hills from Keswick, lives John Ruskin. The present Vicar of Crosthwaite, Canon Rawnsley, is an ardent disciple of Ruskin, and has done much to make Keswick a centre for beautiful art work. Rather more than ten years ago, in order to teach and find work for the boatmen and guides and others unemployed during the winter, he started a "School of Industrial Arts." Classes were formed in woodcarving and metal-working for men, and in embroidery for women. Last year the number of pupils having exceeded one hundred, and the parish room having become too small for growing wants, a handsome building, which is an ornament to the village, was erected for the purpose. On the front of the building are the lines :—

> "The loving eye and patient hand
> Shall work with joy and bless the land."

These words, which are a motto for every workshop, indicate the spirit of the undertaking. There must be love, an eye that rejoices in beauty, in all good work. Work that is dragged

out of a people, that does not ennoble the workers, cannot be beautiful. But to love must be added patience. Love can only shape out its ideals, as it has done in the many beautiful things in the show-room of the Keswick School of Art, by perseverance and discipline. Canon Rawnsley and his helpers may indeed feel proud, not only of having found an additional means of earning for his parishioners, but of having also spread among them the "loving eye and patient hand."

Besides this school of art there is in Keswick a "Ruskin Linen Industry," which turns out some of the most beautiful needlework in the country. The embroidery is all done by hand on hand-spun and hand-woven linen. The flax comes from Ireland, and a young Irishman, who served his apprenticeship in Lisburn, weaves the linen on the premises. He was interested to see me and to hear about Belfast. He was then weaving a piece of thick linen for book-binding. The lady superintendent showed me some specimens of the work, and among many interesting things, a photograph of an exquisitely embroidered pall made by herself and assistants for the funeral of Tennyson. Ruskin had given £200 for the starting of the industry, for which he would take no interest, and since then it had more than paid its way. She told me that she saw Ruskin frequently taking specimens of the work for inspection, and receiving patterns from him, which he freely lent, and sometimes gave, from his collection. She had seen him only a few days previously, and she told me, what I am sure you will be glad to hear, that he is at present so much better in health that he contemplates a return to his loved employments.

Thus from the Druidical idols, of which Gildas complains, we come down through the centuries to the modern conception of art as the "expression of man's delight in the works of God." And as the generations rise and pass away the mountains look down in their majesty, like the eye of the Eternal, who giveth to each age and individual a pecular work, and strength to the faithful to fulfil the same.

Edgar L. Fripp.

In the gardens around London there are more specimens of the cedar of Lebanon than on Mount Lebanon itself.

A Dean on George Dawson and Miss Martineau.

Dean Boyle's "Recollections" is a very pleasant book, pervaded by a sunny temper, and filled with stories and gossip about most of the great characters who have passed across the stage during the last sixty years. Beginning with dim childish memories of Sir Walter Scott, the Dean tells us of all the famous people he has met, finding a good word to say about every one. Many of the readers of the *Seed Sower* will remember the Dean when he was Incumbent of St. Michael's, Handsworth, and subsequently Vicar of Kidderminster. The kindly relations he then cultivated with all sorts and conditions of men, especially with Nonconformist ministers, are reflected in these pages. Much interest attaches to his account and estimate of George Dawson, and a more generous appreciation of Dawson could not be desired by his devout friends. A very different character, Miss Martineau, finds a place in the Dean's gallery of portraits, and is sketched with a true and sympathetic hand. Of Birmingham and George Dawson the Dean writes:—

There was something infectious in the life and public spirit of Birmingham. The energy with which all the good works of the town were supported was very striking. I was soon enlisted as a worker in two of the hospitals, and on the committees I found men working, who soon became great friends of mine. At the meetings of the committee of the Old Library, men of very different opinions were gathered together, and books, old and new, were often discussed in a most pleasant way.

George Dawson, a very remarkable man, and a true lover of books, attended these meetings regularly.

It would be very difficult to define exactly Dawson's precise position in religious matters. He had left his own community, and drawn round him a wide circle of friends, some of whom had been Unitarians, while others had belonged to various communions.

I had many most interesting conversations with him. His intellect was keen and piercing. He got at the heart of a book in a wonderful way, and with the exception of Froude, and A. J. Scott of Manchester, he was the best lecturer I have ever listened to. His after-dinner speeches at the gathering of a Shakespeare Club, where I was often a guest, were inimitable. His address at the opening of the Free Library at Birmingham was indeed worthy of the occasion. At first sight you thought him a little rough, but nearer acquaintance revealed true tenderness of spirit, and a power of appreciating characters and opinions very different from his own. Dr. Badham, who knew him well, and admired him greatly, once said to me, "If Dawson had had in his youth such training as you and I have had, he would have been the first man of

his time." Among my own parishioners there were many who owed their spiritual life entirely to Dawson, and who spoke of him with the deepest and truest affection.

He knew that I was on terms of intimacy with Dr. Newman, and I was the medium who led to Newman's sitting to a Birmingham artist for the very remarkable picture, the original of which is now in the National Portrait Gallery, and the replica at Birmingham. I often discussed the peculiar position of the Church of England with Dawson. The famous words of De Maistre, as to the possibilities of the future union of Christendom, and the part which the Church of England might play, affected him greatly. "If you only knew how to play it," he said, "what a game you clergy have in your hands! You have not broken entirely with the past, and you really might work out a grand church of the future."

"Why don't you join us?" I said; "there is but a hand's-breadth between us."

"I have often thought of it," he replied, "after our conversations; and I am sure you and I, on most of the great questions, are at one." I repeated what I have just written to two very different men, one a leading evangelical clergyman, the other the venerated pastor of the old Unitarian congregation, Mr. Bache, and their replies were almost identical. "Dawson believes a great deal more than people believe he believes." As far as I have seen, the sermons, the prayers, and the lectures which have been published since his death, more than confirm what I have said, but they utterly fail to convey any idea of the powerful eloquence, the sweep of thought, and the genial vigour of the man himself. In actual knowledge of theology Dawson was excelled by Vince, the minister of the chief Baptist Chapel in Birmingham, a man of delightful temper and true Christian manliness; and he did not possess the political insight and the true attributes of a divine so marked and prominent in one who is still among the distinguished men of Birmingham, my ever generous and cordial friend, R. W. Dale, whose writings are text books in many of our theological colleges. Badham and Dale were the life and soul of a graduates' club, where I passed many a pleasant evening. Our rules unfortunately prevented us from having among our members a man whose knowledge of literature is almost unrivalled; to whom Badham gave the name of nature's graduate, the true friend of Free Libraries, Samuel Timmins."

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A favourite holiday ground of the Dean was the English Lakes, where he made the friendship of the Wordsworths, Arnolds, and a host of Lake worthies. His recollections of Miss Martineau will be read in Birmingham with special interest:

In the following year I was again at the Lakes.

Conington gave me an introduction to Mrs. Harriet Martineau, as she liked to be called, and I spent two evenings at her cottage at Ambleside.

She was perfect mistress of monologue, and she talked so freely to me upon all sorts of subjects, that when I read her autobiography, I found that I was already master of the principal events in her remarkable career. I had always been an admirer of her writings, and had just finished her "History of the Peace," when I made her acquaintance. She had lately performed an astonishing feat. In order to give the writer of the "Money Article" in the *Daily News* a holiday, she had undertaken his work for a certain time, and by the aid of telegrams, had actually achieved it. She was glad, I think, to talk on general subjects, and she gave me most interesting and amusing accounts of the many people of eminence she had known.

The account of her first meeting with Charlotte Brontë was exceedingly interesting. She was staying in London with her brother, and sat alone in the dining-room on a Sunday afternoon to receive "Currer Bell." She was astonished when a little sharp-looking, bright-eyed woman entered the room, "And in three minutes we were talking," she said, "as if we had been brought up together." She then gave me a most graphic account of Matthew Arnold's meeting Miss Brontë at her house—a meeting which has been commemorated in the striking poem on "Haworth Churchyard," originally published in *Fraser's Magazine*, and not, I think, improved by some alterations and omissions. Stanley had been recently at Fox How, and she had had a long conversation with him. This led her to speak of Arnold and his sons. She predicted, I remember, a great fame for Matthew as a poet.

Lord Brougham was not a favourite, and his curious conduct when in office brought out many stories. I am sure Miss Martineau exaggerated her own influence as a writer; but I am bound to say that she spoke with great modesty of the books, which I think she is most likely to be remembered by—"Deerbrook" and the "Playfellow." but the marvel of this wonderful woman's talk, when she warmed into enthusiasm about Comte and his system, it is impossible to express. She really spoke as if she was inspired with a desire to convert the world from every opinion and belief to an absolute acceptance of Comte as the hierophant of the coming age. When I ventured mildly to say something of the strange aberrations of Comte's later writings, she told me that these were not to be remembered, but entirely put aside as the coruscations and exuberances of a great heart. I was much struck with her evident interest in all her neighbours, and the enthusiasm with which she spoke of Dr. Arnold's widow—a most constant and unfailing friend. One of the most remarkable features of Miss Martineau's conversation was her power of giving in a short sentence a sketch of a character. What she said of Arthur Stanley dwelt in my mind; "He has the vivid interest in history as a boy has in 'Beauty and the Beast' or 'Jack the Giant Killer.' If he lives, he will carry into old age the freshness of youth, and that, you know, Coleridge says, is genius."

Of Wordsworth's poetry she remarked, "When he is at his best you feel that what he has said is inevitable. Is there anything in the English language better than the 'Wishing Gate?'" I replied, I liked his verses, "At the Grave of Burns," almost as well as anything he ever wrote. "Ah! that," she said, "is because you are Scotch. I have often seen in your countrymen a great love for Wordsworth, because he appreciated Burns and Scott." Every now and then she wandered into the strange world

of mesmerism, and it was marvellous to hear this gifted woman, who had thrown away all the beliefs of her youth, speak quite calmly of the power with which certain clairvoyant friends of her own had anticipated the turns of the money market, and had made successful speculations. When I bade her adieu, she spoke as if her life was soon to end. The loss of her niece, two years after I saw her, was a terrible grief to her.

A Fable in Four Parts.

(*a*) Outside the gate of a white house on a country road sat a shaggy dog of no particular species. A little boy came along the road with his mother. "O mother," said he, "look what a dear old doggie," and he advanced with friendly word and outstretched hand to pat the rough head. The dog wagged his tail, blinked his eyes, rose, stretched himself, sneezed, and generally returned the friendly greeting. After some further interchange of friendliness, the boy ran after his mother, and the dog settled down again with a contented grunt.

(*b*) Along the same road there presently came two little girls going home from school. "O Polly," said the elder, "look at that ugly brute! I do believe he's vicious." She lifted a stick from the side of the road, and they both cast frightened looks at the dog, who, thus disturbed, raised his head and growled. At this the younger child screamed, and both took to their heels. The dog followed for a short distance, barking, then returned to his place, and sat down looking decidedly ruffled. The girls told everyone what a savage dog they had escaped from.

(*c*) Tom Robinson was a young bachelor of ordinary type. Coming out one day from his lodgings he encountered a troup of merry young people. "O Mr. Robinson," they said, "we were just coming to find you; we are getting up a dramatic entertainment, and we want you to help us." "I should be of no use," said Tom. "No use!" they said, "you are the very man we want; can you come in to-morrow night?" And Tom went and took his part with energy and enjoyment, and returned home feeling well content with himself and the world. Everybody said what a kind obliging fellow Tom Robinson was.

(*d*) Emerging another day from his rooms, Robinson met Mr. and Mrs. Jones, who accosted him. "Ah! Mr. Robinson," said Jones, "how are you? what a hermit you are! Our young people are having a small gathering to-night,—charades and so forth;—not much in your line, I fancy, but if you care to look in, pray do." Tom went. There was a good deal of fun going on, but he was not asked to take part in it, as Mrs. Jones said he would be no good at that sort of thing. So he stood about among older people whom he did not know, for some time, and went home early, feeling not of much use to himself or to anyone else. "My dear," said Mrs. Jones, at breakfast next morning, "what an awkward fellow young Robinson is."

MORAL —Dogs or men, we show our best side to those who have some faith in us.

C. E. F.

To a Friend—a Sculptor.

From the life that is around you,
Strong and noble impulse borrow,
For the coming of the morrow,
And the work that God has found you.

And, if in the page of story
You would view the flight of ages,
Learn the wisdom of the sages—
All its beauty—all its glory.

Ne'er forget, the past revering,
That the present has its splendour,
Mighty men and deeds, that render
Symbols of to-day endearing.

All is symbol—did we know it!
Speaking words of God unto us,
Breathing in us, breathing through us,
Be you sculptor or the poet.

Telling in each form we fashion
All the joy we have in being,
All the wonder we are seeing,
All our artist-life of passion.

All is symbol—all revealing
Higher truth and higher beauty,
Higher love and higher duty,
Higher harmonies unsealing.

Jesus, when in symbols veiling
Precious truths from God his Father,
Sought no storied past, but rather
Found each common thing availing.

Why then seek the page of story?
God speaks still the same as ever,
All is good to the all-giver,
All the earth is full of glory.

Let us from the life around us
Strong and noble impulse borrow,
For the coming of the morrow,
And the work that God has found us.

H. H. JOHNSON.

Moral Cowardice.

As a fact, moral cowardice has to answer for worse evils than has the timidity which will not enter a burning house, or encounter a midnight thief. Dread of misconstruction, of giving offence, may lead as directly to cruelty, as did the frantic terror of the Russian peasant, who flung her children one by one to the pursuing wolves. Womanly and motherly tongues may be heard describing the ill-usage of little children witnessed in public streets or parks, and then making the strange avowal, "I did think of following the nurse home, but people are so apt to treat any imputation on their servants as a liberty." Perhaps, for "people" are sometimes very oddly constituted, but surely the poor babies might have the benefit of the doubt.

Or it may happen that a young boy is pining at the school to which his Australian parents hastily consigned him. The uncles and aunts at home grieve over his miseries, and shake their heads at his changed looks and ways. But they won't interfere or even protest. "It would not do to be meddlesome. A better arrangement might not easily be made." Such are the reasons given for remaining passive. And they have some force. It is no light matter to act without lawful authority, or to risk the resentment of near kinsfolk, and those who meditate bold steps should count the possible cost. But if, having counted it, they deliberately prefer to chance the child's growing up sickly or rebellious, rather than let themselves be dubbed indiscreet, impetuous, busy-bodies, or what not, then, like Sir William Temple, they "shrink from responsibility with a pusillanimous fear," mastering both love and duty.

Moved by the like fear, well-meaning people constantly fail in another way to better the lives of those for whom they profess to care. They are ready enough generally to criticise, to wish confidentially that A. were more methodical and punctual, so that it might be possible to obtain for her the office she is eager to fill; to lament B.'s broken health, due doubtless to his wife's careless catering and over-heated rooms; or to regret those Bohemian habits of C.'s, which create against him—good fellow though he is—so strong a prejudice. But, unless spurred by personal irritation, or endowed with a special propensity for reforming their species, they cannot bring themselves to expostulate with the delinquents. They have chafed over A.'s forgotten engagements; they have eaten B.'s tough steaks; C. has treated them with scant ceremony. If they allude, however lightly, to these things, it will seem (that convenient formula!) as if they were indicating their own past discomfort and annoyance.

In other words, they will present themselves in an unpleasing light! And if this is felt to be a not quite valid excuse for silence, another is soon forthcoming. "They have no right," so runs the plea, "to hurt people's feelings."

We none of us have a right to hurt any human being's feeling needlessly or indifferently; but if we believe that the pin prick of our strictures might possibly save those dear to us from the sharper pain of illness, failure, or friendliness, then what can be said for the faint-heartedness that can't utter them, because the effort might be misinterpreted?

And only those to whom plain speaking *is* an effort can do this service. The slightest sign of satisfaction in delivering home truths is fatal to their efficacy, and a remonstrance, unlike an oration, comes most eloquently from hesitating lips.

It does not follow that we are to be always testifying. Often, indeed, we shall do well to ignore defects which seem irremediable, rather than forfeit valuable help, weaken a strong influence, or provoke an impatient or stubborn temper. But there is all the difference in the world between the silence maintained by a wise self-command, and that other silence which comes of craven self-regard.

This lack of moral courage, which enfeebles friendship and sometimes makes affection almost worthless, tells too in dealing with strangers, notably in the giving of characters.

There is indeed a real difficulty here, for the obvious duty of truth-telling often seems to clash with the no less pressing claim of mercy. Too strong a stress laid upon some petty theft or youthful folly may mean something like beggary to a servant, and it is hard for any pen to sketch a perfectly fair portrait in a few strokes. Simple justice demands therefore a careful choice of words; but self-interest, going farther, suggests a caution hardly less misleading than calumny itself

Certain inquiries are wilfully ignored, it being conveniently assumed that, if the inquirers are very solicitous about those special points, they will notice the omissions and repeat their queries. But what does this really mean? That only persons who give proof of quick perception and steady determination require reliable butlers and cooks? One would suppose it to be rather the other way. No! the unspoken explanation is not hard to find. If further pressure extorts damaging truths, the character givers can now, at least, defend themselves from any accusations of malignity, by representing that their evidence has been wrung from them against their will. The justification, however, is feeble from beginning to end. Either the information ought to be freely given or firmly withheld. There is something ignoble in coquetting with a responsibility. To set down naught in malice is a rule which should need no enforcing; to extenuate as far as may be errors and defects which may entail heavy penalties, this will be the impulse of every generous nature; but reserve will prove in the long-run no truer kindness to servants than to mistresses, for the consciousness that persistent idleness or insolence may mean starvation will be a strong incentive to that self-control out of which goodness largely springs.

Contagious complaints offer another occasion for blameable reticence. Scarlet fever appears in a school or among a shop-keeper's children, and those who hear of it are careful that they and theirs give the place a wide berth. But while insuring the safety of their own belongings, and quietly warning their friends, they are not always disposed to proclaim the danger to all whom it may concern. They are grateful perhaps to the schoolmaster for much patience with their dull boy, they have a long-running account with the butcher or baker, and even if unfettered by any such special tie, still they are unwilling to figure in a fellow-townsman's eyes as the purveyors of news which may rob him of pupils or custom. So they console themselves with the reflection that full precautions will certainly be taken in the infected house, that the fact is sure to get abroad soon without their help, and probably they really half believe that they are only loth to be unneighbourly, and see no inconsistency in professing reliance on measures which don't give them a sense of security, or on the spread of intelligence which they won't publish. But unless they honestly hold that the heaviest blows of fate are those which touch the pocket, there is a twist in their benevolence. They will not "to do a great good, do a little harm," or, more truly, they deem it worse to be thought heartless than to be so.

Yet for all the harm they do to others, and the good they leave undone, those who cannot face a frown or endure an unmerited sneer are their own worst enemies. They find it much easier to stand aside and leave difficulties to adjust themselves, than to go out to meet them. It seems mercenary and distrustful to be very explicit about money arrangements, or exact in defining the terms of a contract. It sounds ungracious to oppose a suggestion, or distinctly refuse an offer or request. And hope is ready to tell a flattering tale. The claims are surely too clear for dispute. The obnoxious plan may probably fall through; and when things do not work out so comfortably, when the almost inevitable explanation at last betrays that a scheme may wear very different aspects in different minds, or that a tacit consent really meant less than nothing, then there is excited a mutual bitterness made up of many elements, and altogether disportioned to the original grievance.

Many of us have known the burden of unwelcome tidings which we ought to convey, and have lived through beforehand the startled glance, the exclamation of dismay, perhaps of anger, they may evoke. But the brave spirit, like the high-mettled horse, dashes at its hard work, and having done it, is at ease. The coward, swerving again and again from the straight course, feels, if he does not own, that "fear is more pain than is the pain it fears."

FRANCIS G. FAITHFULL.

Illustrative of the late Tzar's character, Dr. Borges says that whenever Alexander III. had to relate to his children his experiences in Turkey, he used the opportunity to impress them with his loathing, and frequently closed his remarks shuddering in recollection of some hideous scene: "Boys, war is dreadful, horrible, beastly! May God keep you from seeing it, from drawing a sword!"

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

Our Baby.

Patter, patter, patter
Of the sweetest feet,
Shining of two blue eyes
Raised for mine to greet.

Dearest little darling,
Brightest little flower,
Sent direct from heaven
My glad heart to dower.

Oh! that head so radiant,
With its sunny hair;
Oh! those eyes so star-like,
Glancing here and there.

Hands so full of dimples,
Limbs so round and white,
Lips that smile upon us
With a rosy light.

Dearest little laddie,
Darling little boy,
God Himself looks on thee
As a wondrous joy.

And in heaven the angels
Sweeter sing for thee,
And the gentle Jesus
Loves thee tenderly.

And on earth the flowers
Put on colours gay
For the little laddie
Who may pass their way.

All things bright are brighter
Since you came to earth:
All things dark must vanish
By your baby mirth.

Loved beyond description,
Loved beyond compare;
No one else can rival
Baby anywhere.

L. T. MEADE.

Flowers in the Sand.

You have been at the seaside in summer. You have spent many a happy day on the sands. And no doubt you have built houses there, and planted gardens round about them, as we, who are grown up, also in our childhood did. It was perhaps you the poet was looking at who wrote the pleasant verses I am about to repeat:—

"Once on a time some little hands
Planted a garden on the sands;
And with a wish to keep it dry
They raised a wall five inches high.
Within the wall and round the walks
They made a slender fence of stalks.
And then they formed an arbour cool
And dug in front a tiny pool.
Their beds were oval, round, and square,
Thrown up and trimmed with decent care.
In these they planted laurel twigs,
And prickly holly, little sprigs
Of ash and poplar, and, for show,
Bright daffodils and heart's-ease low;
With pink-eyed daisies by the score
And buttecups and many more.
One rose they found with great delight
And stuck it in with all their might.
Thus finished, then they went away
Resolved to come another day."

But when they came back they found that their labour was all in vain. The flowers were withered. The rose and the heart's-ease had died. In all their garden there was neither life nor growth. And this was the reason: not one of all the flowers they had planted had a root. And if every one had had a root, they could not have grown in the salt sand of the shore. There are children who sometimes do right things, and yet their right things have no roots. They do them only because they are told to do them, or because they fear they will be punished if they don't do them, and their virtues are like flowers stuck in a sand garden. Now, our virtues only live when they have roots, and the roots of virtue are in love. We must do right things because we love right things; we must be kind because we love kindness; we must love truth and honesty if truth and honesty is to be deep-rooted. This is what the apostle meant when he told people that they must be "*rooted* and grounded in love."

The Fox and the Cat.

One day a Cat met a Fox in the wood. "Ah," she thought, "he is clever and sensible, and talked of in the world a great deal; I will speak to him." So she said, quite in a friendly manner, "Good morning, dear Mr. Fox, how are you? and how do affairs go with you in these expensive times?"

The Fox, full of pride, looked at the Cat from head to foot, and knew hardly what to say to her for a long time. At last he said, "Oh you poor little whisker-cleaner, you grey old tabby, you hungry mouse-hunter, what are you thinking about to come to me, and to stand there and ask me how I am going on? What have you learnt, and how many tricks do you know?"

"I know only one trick," answered the Cat meekly.

"And pray what is that?" he asked.

"Well," she said, "if the hounds are behind me, I can spring up into a tree and save myself."

"Is that all?" cried the Fox; "why, I am master of a hundred tricks, and have over and above all a sackful of cunning; but I pity you, puss; so come with me, and I will teach you how to baffle both men and hounds."

At this moment a hunter, with four hounds, was seen approaching. The Cat sprang nimbly up a tree, and seated herself on the highest branch, where, by the spreading foliage, she was quite concealed.

"Turn out the sack, Mr. Fox! turn out the sack!" cried the Cat, ; but the hounds had already seized him and held him fast.

"Ah, Mr. Fox," cried the Cat, "your hundred tricks are not of much use to you; now if you had only known one like mine, you would not have so quickly lost your life."

J. & W. GRIMM.

Star Dust!

IS THINKING all? Should not life be a *loving* also?

It is to me an eternal miracle to see the same roses year after year bloom as freshly as they did in Paradise!

Life and change are synonymous terms. We sigh for calm till we have it, and then sigh deeper than we ever sighed before to escape from it.

When the imagination gets very familiar with its gods, it brings them down to the level of a quite ordinary humanity.

We make effort enough for knowledge—why not to obtain the socialities of life, which are far more valuable than knowledge?

It is society that makes the individual: it is the individual that makes society. Both are true. And Nature does not make us all alike.

A rule which our own reason approves is not a restraint: it is a chosen course of action; as freely chosen as any course of social action can be.

In no necessary toil can there be any degradation. It is the gross companionship or gross habits connected with it that alone renders it degrading. It is only the moral dirt that sticks.

We talk of angels from heaven sent down to minister to us; and I suppose we do not talk altogether unwisely: but there are times when the fellow-man who puts his hand in ours is more to us than any angel could be.

We have all been fairies once. And now, as we go wandering back over the fields of memory, we stoop and pick up the acorn-cups, and marvel how we ever crept into them, as we assuredly did, most rare and spacious habitations.

How little of the sea can a child carry in his hand. As little do I take away of my boundless sea—the love of God.

The blossom cannot tell what becomes of its odour, and no man can tell what becomes of his influence and example, that roll away from him and go beyond his ken on their mission.

"No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but only grievous; *nevertheless*"——. That "nevertheless" always seems to me like a golden gate on golden hinges turning.

Dear heart, look not so much to the mercies of God as to the God of mercies. It is said of an eastern teacher that he prized the king's countenance more than the king's coin. How much more should it be true of thee!

The real man is one who always finds excuses for others but never excuses himself.

Selfishness is that detestable vice which no one will forgive in others, and no one is without in himself.

The conditions of life are like skeins of silk or thread. To make the most of them we need only to take them by the right end.

It is necessary, sometimes, to refrain from questioning our friends, that we may not draw from them what we ought not to know, and especially that we may not tempt them to deceive us.

Selfish men cannot understand unselfishness. They have no ear for its music. You may play Beethoven's symphonies to a greedy spider until doomsday, and it will not care for them. It would rather have a fly!

A mean man cannot be happy. A selfish man cannot be happy. It is only the generous and the loving who are happy.

Annual Meetings of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association.

[NOTES BY AN IRRESPONSIBLE COUNTRY CRITIC.]

It is unfortunately inevitable that these meetings should be attended by few ministers from the Manchester district, because they are held in Whit-week. But why should the Birmingham district be so poorly represented? From Birmingham itself, not a single minister; and of the ministers who are members of the Midland Provincial Assembly only four were present. In spite of the local Whitsuntide gatherings, Manchester beat Birmingham by more than three to one. Laymen are not so generally known by name and sight as ministers, but I believe that the number of laymen present from the Manchester district was much more than three times as great as the number from the Birmingham district.

The audience which gathered to hear the Essex Hall lecture on the Tuesday evening filled the hall, with the exception of one row of chairs. Sitting quite at the back, one was impressed by the close and eager attention with which the lecture was listened to during the eighty minutes it lasted. Few who were present are likely to let many weeks go by before they read it carefully. Not because it was difficult to hear, for Professor Carpenter was never in better voice, and every word reached the furthest corner of the hall. Nor because it was difficult to understand, since the ground-plan was marked out with a clearness which must have enabled all at any moment to realise the point arrived at, and the exposition of the various sections was so admirably lucid, that he whose interest in the subject had been most general may well have thought he was following and appreciating it all; but because the audience felt that they were listening to the results of long and profound thought, anxiously weighed and expressed with a care, a sense of responsibility that demanded for the details rather than the general conclusions more deliberate examination than could be given at a first hearing. The beauty of the form will send many of the hearers to the printed page. Again and again, in course of the delivery of the lecture, one was making a mental note of some passage to be read and re-read: thought could not dwell upon it, since the lecturer was already passing on to something else. But chiefly the lecture will be read and studied simply because it was impossible to take in much more than the main drift at the hearing. It was easy to follow the main drift, but simple as the lecture seemed, every sentence was pack-full of matter, and contained the fruits of a wide reading, a sympathetic insight, and a scholarship possible to few besides the lecturer. Something of the richness of these fruits could be understood by all, but most by those who, with ordinary gifts and inferior tools, have themselves with any care been over some part of the same ground. An examination of the extracts given in *The Inquirer* affords proof that the impressions gathered at the hearing of the lecture were correct, and that a careful study of the whole when published must richly reward all who will give it. The reception of the lecture was most cordial. We are not a demonstrative people upon such occasions, and the interest was too intense for repeated interruptions of applause; but when opportunity did occur it was evident that the response was from the heart of the audience, and another proof, were any required other than ordinary intercourse among Unitarians, that those are a small and rapidly-decreasing minority among Unitarians who have not yet realised that acceptance of the so-called miraculous is inconsistent with the thought of the Immanence of God, and that, since the natural is the divine and the unceasing miracle, what has been called the supernatural must now be called the infranatural. The "down-grade" they call this, who, without the insight of the historic sense, still cling to miracle as proof of anything. It is emancipation: a gain to religion and to life inconceivable to those who have not won and accepted their freedom. Something seems, perhaps *is*, lost at first; but it is soon forgotten, while the gain is infinite and constantly increases.

The anniversary service on the Wednesday morning was held at Hampstead. It would be well if it were never held anywhere else. It is pleasanter to walk, bus, or tram to Hampstead than to tram, bus, or go by horizontal flue to Nottinghill Gate, Brixton, or Islington. Besides, quite apart on the one hand from the surroundings, and on the other from the tint of the windows, there is an atmosphere about Hampstead Chapel, absent from every other chapel in London. There had been some doubt whether Hampstead was not too much in the suburbs for many to come, but the very large congregation which joined in the service was full proof to the contrary. Rev. D. Walmsley conducted the service and also preached the sermon. The sermon was no theological manifesto, it discussed no ontologic theory, it attempted no appreciation of the position of Unitarian thought in England or in the world; it was a deeply religious utterance; it spoke of the strength, gladness, beauty, of the sufficiency for all life of the simple gospel; it was a revelation of personal experience, simple, direct, spoken from the heart, and reaching the heart; a sermon inspiring and helpful to ministers and laymen alike. There must have been many besides your correspondent, who would have been glad to meet the preacher afterwards to say, with a hand-clasp, a personal "thank you."

The music chosen for the hymns was in every case unusually appropriate to the occasion. As to the hymns themselves, exception must be taken to two things. There is, no doubt, wide difference of opinion amongst us as to such hymns as the third—Dix's "Come unto me, ye weary,"—still with differences of meaning probably all can sing that Jesus is a giver of life and light and rest. But the 4th verse, "And whosoever cometh, I will not cast him out." Is there a single Unitarian who believes that it rests with Jesus whether any man is or shall be cast out from anything? And yet, here were Unitarians assembled from all parts of the country for their anniversary service, asked to join in singing these words. And the first hymn began with the prayer that God would guide and keep us on our way "through this weary wilderness." Do any of us still believe that hopeless, yes, and faithless "drivel," as Chadwick somewhere calls it? Does not such contempt for this world, God's world, belong to a byegone time? Spite of suffering, sorrow and sin are not this world, and this life sacred and sublime? Surely it

is strange to ask a representative gathering of Unitarians to sing words which are not Christian—which are atheistic rather than theistic. Let us have no more of this "weary wilderness" business; there has been far, far too much of it in the past, and it has done incalculable harm. But let us take courage and seek insight.

So much space has been used for the lecture and the service, that the remaining meetings can be little more than mentioned. The new arrangement by which at the business meeting, instead of parts of the report being read, the chairman of the chief committees spoke of the work of those departments of which they had special knowledge, was distinctly successful and an improvement.

There was too much matter in the five papers read at the conferences on the Thursday morning for one morning's work. The first conference, on "Missionary Methods and Work," was valuable, but deadly dull. This is no disrespect to the readers of the three papers, but a necessary consequence of the subject. The paper of Rev. Dendy Agate, very weighty in matter, and somewhat in manner, described the result of work as Superintendent Missionary in the Manchester district. If the results are not startling they are satisfactory, and argue hopefully for the work upon which Rev. J. Harrison is about to enter in the Birmingham district. The paper of Rev. W. Griffiths, which suffered from its delivery, spoke of work in a district little known to most of his hearers, and showed that if Wales is a separate nation, its reception of Unitarianism in new districts is very like that given elsewhere. The fervid enthusiasm of Rev. W. H. Lambell's paper on missionary methods brought the first series to a close. On the whole it was, as I said, deadly dull, and it is a question whether papers on such subjects would not be better taken as read and printed among the proceedings in *The Inquirer*. Moreover, the two papers on "The Social Implications of our Faith," followed by a real discussion would have been an ample morning's work. In the first paper Rev. G. St. Clair opposed the preaching of economic doctrines and Socialistic principles from the pulpit, and maintained that the minister's duty is rather to teach the necessity to examine social questions and the spirit in which they should be examined. Mr. G. H. Perris' paper, which, though it also suffered from its delivery, was the most brilliant thing at the meetings, took the other side. It was a magnificent paper, and should be read. This I say, although entirely opposed to his view, and agreeing with Mr. St. Clair's on the main question. There was a sermon in one sentence:—"It is not alone the slaves that slavery kills, but the slave-owners, the slave-traders, the buyers of slave products, every man who is an unprotesting witness of his brother's injury." That is not only true of slavery, but of every wrong.

The discussions at these conferences are always valueless farces: they are not discussions at all. Who can say anything on a paper just heard, and with not more than five minutes allowed? It would have been well if these two papers had been the work of the morning, if they had been read beforehand by four or five picked speakers, who should be allowed a quarter-of-an-hour each, and should prepare themselves to time,—and if then shorter speeches had been allowed for another half-hour before the readers of the papers replied.

The conversazione at the Institute of Painters in Water-colours was in every way a delightful gathering. The rooms were so full as to suggest the possibility that it may be necessary soon to engage larger rooms for this meeting. It is questionable whether many will approve the suggestion of a return to speeches during any part of the one evening set apart for social intercourse.

There is no space to speak of the paper readand the general proceedings at the meeting of the Sunday School Association on the Friday morning, but it is pleasant to remember the enthusiasm with which Rev. W. Copeland Bowie was received on his rising to respond after the presentation by Mr. Nettlefold of the address and purse, which were to symbolise the gratitude of the association for ten years' work as secretary. Platform and audience rose to a man, and the applause was so loud and long that it seemed as though it would never cease. Comparatively few had known of the intended presentation beforehand, or many more than the two hundred would have wished to join in doing honour to one who, not only in Sunday-school work, but in multifarious work for the Unitarian cause generally, has won the confidence and admiration of all.

News from the Field.

The REV. J. HARRISON will commence his work as District Missionary for the Midlands on the second Sunday in July. An induction service will be held early in October.

BANBURY.—On Whit Sunday the Sunday school anniversary was held. In the afternoon the minister (Rev. H. Hill) discoursed on "Mutual Encouragement and Helpfulness in Sunday School and Church," and in the evening on "Every Man in His Own Order; or, Receiving and Giving." The choir and scholars sang a number of bright and appropriate pieces of music at each service in an excellent manner, under the able guidance of the organist, Mr F. T. C. Webb. The collection for the day was about the same as last year.

BIRMINGHAM.—The Old Meeting Sunday School Anniversary was held on Sunday, June 23rd, when sermons were preached by Rev. J. Wood. The collections amounted to £31 11s. 6d.

BIRMINGHAM (*Hurst Street Domestic Mission*).—The fifty-fifth annual meeting of the Hurst Street Domestic Mission was held on Monday evening, June 17th, at the People's Hall, Hurst Street, Mr. Howard S. Smith in the chair. Amongst others present were Messrs. F. S. Bolton (hon. treasurer), W. J. Clarke (the missionary), W. Sorrill, G. Johnson, Pearce, Middleton, J. W. Field, Eggington, and W. H. Ryland (hon. secretary). After a short report from the committee, Mr. W. J. Clarke read his report, which contained an account of the work of the multitudinous branches of the Mission, and stated that, although in some branches there had been a slight

falling-off, this had been more than recompensed by the decided increase in others, and Mr. Clarke was able to announce that, on the whole, more good had been accomplished in various ways by the direct and indirect agencies of the Mission than had ever before been the case. The chapel services, junior Sunday-schools, Teachers' Preparation Class, Adult Sunday Morning Class (the income of which was raised entirely by the members of the class, and amounted to £128 9s. 10d.—£5 11s. 1d. more than the expenses incurred in conducting the class), Adult Afternoon Class, week-day classes (containing 132 students, one of whom had been awarded a Queen's Prize), Band of Hope, and several other branches of the work were being continued with great success. The library was deficient in books, but what were at the command of the Mission had been made good use of. The mothers' meetings had been most encouragingly attended, the average being 270. There had been an increase of 10 per cent. in the membership of the Provident Institution, the management expenses of which had been kept for the first time within the specified amount. The year's working of this branch had given a surplus of £50, and the quinquennial valuation showed that, after providing for all claims which could be made upon it, the society would still have a surplus of £189. Medical notes to the number of 1,035, and garments numbering 587, had been distributed, and special gifts had been made on Christmas and New Year's Days. Help had been received during the nine months in the shape of 1,109 medical notes, 35 miscellaneous gifts, 98 parcels of clothing, and £273 4s for general relief and other purposes.—The report of the treasurer stated that the subscriptions during the year had amounted to £303, and the donations to £80, and the total income from all sources was £657 18. 7d. The expenditure was £1,019 1s. 7d., leaving a deficiency of £362, which sum, however, was owing at the commencement of the year.—In moving the adoption of the report, the Chairman said the reading of the missionary's report had inspired him with two feelings. One was of satisfaction and gratitude for the magnitude and value of the work, and the other was of regret that a great deal of that work should be necessary in such a country as ours. It was remarkable that in a town where there was so much wealth the distress was so great. The treasurer's statement had shown that there was a deficiency of £360, and they had also had a deficit of £390 on an old building account, but he had great pleasure in announcing that since the preparation of the report both these debts had been cleared off. The means had been found through a legacy of about £467 which was left by Mrs. Smart, and a further sum of over £300 which Mr. Clarke had raised by his own efforts.—The report was approved, and Mr. H. S. Smith was re-elected president; Mr. Bolton hon. treasurer; and Mr. W. H. Ryland hon. secretary. The retiring committee were also re-elected.

LYE.—Anniversary services were held on Sunday, May 26th, the preacher being the Rev. B. Kirkman Gray, of Warwick. The congregations were very good, but the collections were below the average of recent years. The new class-room is already proving very useful. Even at this time of the year the young people determined to start a Mutual Improvement Society, and thus try to make up for the time lost in the previous months. Papers have been read by Messrs. R. Perry and Howard Pardoe, and by the minister. Two social evenings have also been held, both of which were a great success. Sewing meetings are being held in the new room in preparation for a bazaar to be held in the autumn.

SHREWSBURY.—A Band of Hope was inaugurated on Sunday afternoon, June 9th, in connection with the Sunday School of this church, when forty-eight members were enrolled. Addresses were delivered by the Rev. E. Myers, F.G.S., and Councillor J. Oliver, J.P. Mr. Oliver gave some very interesting reminiscences of his experience as a total abstainer, extending over a period of forty-three years, and attributed his success in life largely to the fact of his having been trained, as a child, in the principles of total abstinence. He urged the scholars to remember what they had that day promised to do, and venture to predict that not one of them would ever have cause to regret the pledge they had made, but they would grow up better men and women without knowing the taste of intoxicants, and they would find that in total abstinence they had one of the very best safeguards against many of the temptations they would meet with in life. A vote of thanks to Mr. Oliver for his address, proposed by the Rev. E. Myers and seconded by Mr. W. Vickery, the hon secretary and treasurer, brought a most successful inaugural meeting to a close.

SHREWSBURY (*High Street Church*).—The 105th anniversary services of the Sunday School connected with High Street (Shrewsbury) Church were celebrated on Sunday, June 16th. Two admirable sermons were preached by the Rev. E. Myers, F.G.S. The collections were on benaif of the Sunday School Fund.—On Monday the Sunday School children had their annual excursion, and it was thoroughly enjoyed.

The Light of Life.

All-fostering sun! that sheddest from the sky
Floods of transfiguring light t' illumine earth,
And all that else were low and mean, with worth,
Harmonious blending it with all that's high
And glorious in grace and majesty.
Sun! that from seeming death aye teemest birth
Till summer's wealth springs out of winter's dearth,
Each linked with all in beauty wondrously!
Sun! outward orb, set in the heavens above!
Divinely dost thou mirror to our view,
As emblem bright, the all-embracing love,
Thy source—the source of all things old and new—
In whom all mysteries of life dissolve,
As changing times eternally revolve.

REV. D. DAVIS.